



*Members of the Tenant Involvement Team receiving their award.*

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## Celebrating community engagement and lasting impact

The Tenant Involvement Team, led by Sarah Thompson, has won a North Yorkshire Council 'creative' staff award celebrating their dedication to council housing tenants and community engagement. Their initiatives, such as spring clean events and skip days, have strengthened neighbourhood bonds and improved access to council services. By breaking down barriers they've reached tenants who might not usually get involved. Thank you to the tenants who regularly give us your time and share your experiences, fill in surveys or take part in cleanups - you are a valued part of the movement to put tenants at the heart of everything we do. We look forward to working with even more of you in the coming year.

The aim of this newsletter is to keep you informed about things that affect you and your home.

This issue has been co-produced with the tenant editorial panel - we hope you find some useful information inside.

If you have a story that you would like to share, or if you want to get involved, please email [myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk)

### Do you need this newsletter in large print or another language?

Please contact [myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk)  
This newsletter is also available online at [northyorks.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement](http://northyorks.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement)

## Welcome from Carl Doolan, Head of Housing Management and Landlord Services

### Welcome to the Spring 2026 edition of Open Door Magazine!

I am sure everyone is glad that Spring is on the way, and the days are getting a bit longer.

As your landlord, we have already been in touch with you a couple of times this year.

The first time was a letter back in February, which explained the changes to your tenancy agreement.

A summary was provided with the letter – the changes are to make sure that everyone has the same agreement and receives the same service wherever you live.

The new tenancy agreement comes in to force from 1 April 2026, and you don't need to take any action.

You will have also received your annual letter telling you about your rent payments for 2026-27.

If you have any questions about either of these, please get in touch with us using the details on the back page.

We hope you find Spring Open Door useful – we'd love to hear what you would like to see in the newsletter – if you have any ideas, please send us an email to [myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk)

Best wishes,  
**Carl**



## Tenant Profile Survey

Some of you will have had a text and a letter about filling in our Tenant Profile Survey.

The survey asked some questions to help us learn more about you, so that we can adapt our services to meet your needs better.

Thank you to all of you that took part.

An independent market research company called Acuity did the survey on our behalf.

This means your responses were collected, analysed, and reported by an impartial organisation, outside of the council.

The research company follows strict professional standards to ensure that your answers remain confidential and are presented exactly as you provided them.

We hope to start using the information provided to better meet your needs in the near future.



## Get ready for our gardening competition!

Is your home brightened by a single house plant, a collection of window boxes, a few cheerful pots, or perhaps a flourishing communal garden?

No matter how much or how little space you have, every tenant or leaseholder is warmly invited to take part in our 2026 gardening competition! This is a celebration of creativity, green fingers, and community spirit - where everyone has a fair chance to shine. Entries are welcome from all tenants, whether you nurture a tiny succulent on your windowsill, a colourful array of pots by your front door, or you tend to a patch in a shared outdoor space.

Even if it's just a house plant you're proud of, we want to see it! The competition is about making the most of what you have, no matter the size. Now is the perfect time to start planning your display and capturing its best moments. Over the summer, take photos and get ready to send them in. We'll share full entry details in our summer edition, out in early June.

Judging takes place in September, with winners revealed in our December newsletter. There's a fantastic prize - so why not have a go?



# Your safety first: Essential repairs and electrical checks - advice for every tenant



The Housing Standards team, led by Lorraine Larini, deals with repairs and maintenance to your property – including safety checks and improvements. Here are a few updates from the team that we hope you find useful:

## Repairs

We are currently dealing with very high demand for repairs – please bear with us. We are focusing on emergency and urgent repairs, meaning routine repairs may take a little longer. We will be using more contractors to help get your repairs done faster. A reminder to beware of ‘no win, no fee’ disrepair claims – don’t sign anything on the doorstep and please either report repairs or make a complaint directly to us – details of how to do this are on the back cover of this newsletter.

## Electrical safety

Be alert for electrical hazards in your home, including frayed or damaged leads, cracked or broken plugs and appliances, burn marks, blown fuses, tripped circuit breakers, and damaged sockets or light switches.

### To stay safe:

- Report any electrical installation issues to us immediately. Details are on the back cover.
- Follow manufacturers’ instructions when using appliances.
- Use a Residual Current Device (RCD or ‘circuit breaker’) for outdoor electrical equipment.
- Remove plugs carefully by gripping the plug, not by pulling the cable.

## Scooters - a reminder

- Never charge your electric bikes or scooters while you are sleeping or not at home.
- Never block your escape route with your e-bike or scooter.
- Never tamper with the battery and always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Never cover your charger - this could lead to it overheating or catching fire.
- Always unplug your charger once it’s finished charging.
- Always use the correct charger.
- Check your battery and charger meets UK safety standards.

Never attempt DIY repairs on electrical installations or appliances, bring mains-powered portable appliances into the bathroom, use appliances with worn flexes, operate electrical devices with wet hands, or try to fix damaged wiring, switches or lights yourself. Safety is a joint responsibility—report concerns and follow these simple precautions to help keep your home safe.

We hope this information is helpful. In the Summer newsletter, look out for information about new sensors that will be fitted in some homes to check for things like carbon monoxide and humidity levels. There’ll also be some information about asbestos safety in your home and what to do if you are planning any DIY.

A list of contractors working on our behalf can be found at [northyorks.gov.uk/housing-contractors](https://northyorks.gov.uk/housing-contractors)

You can also call the number on the back page if you want to check a contractor is working on behalf of the council.



## Tenant Voice Panel update

The Tenant Voice Panel is where tenants, leaseholders and housing colleagues work together on improving our services for tenants. This is your opportunity to help shape the services that affect you, your home and your community. So, if you think things could be improved or can see a better way of doing something, join the panel!

The panel met just before Christmas 2025 and we saw a few new faces. We discussed progress against the service improvement plan – this is a list of actions and changes that your housing service aims to make in order to provide better and safer services for tenants.

It sets out what needs to be improved, how these improvements will be made, and who is responsible for making sure they happen. The plan is regularly reviewed to check progress and ensure everything is on track, with updates shared so tenants know what's being done and can get involved where possible.

We also share ideas on how your housing service can be improved. The panel will next meet in March 2026.

We would love to welcome new members - if you would like more info please email [myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk) or call the number on the back page.

**Reminder! Please test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors every week – why not do this at the same time each week and make it part of your routine?**



## Progress update – how we are improving our policies

Last year, some tenants helped us look at how we take care of gardens and green spaces – this is called the Grounds Maintenance Policy. Their ideas have helped guide updates to the policy.

The Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee is looking at what standards we should set and how we might improve the grounds maintenance service. Before we can make decisions, we need to find out how much the different options will cost. We hope to get these figures in the next few months. After that, the group will continue their work.

While we wait, we've already made some good progress. There was a tidy-up day at D'Arcy Court, and we are now doing extra maintenance in Selby.

Once we know the costs and the review moves ahead, there will be more chances for tenants

## Tenant review of the complaints process,

by Barbara Rickards

“The Tenant Scrutiny Panel recently reviewed the Council's approach to handling complaints. As part of this work, we considered the findings from lots of tasks including, a review of the website, looking at example complaints and gathering best practice from other housing providers. We also invited Heads of Service and relevant officers to give insight into how their teams manage complaints, and the processes they follow.

Scrutiny panel members asked questions to better understand how complaints are handled from start to finish. Through this, the group identified several areas where communication and processes could be improved.

Following our review, the group produced a detailed report and action plan. This was presented to the housing improvement board, who welcomed the feedback, acknowledged the issues raised, and agreed to act on the recommendations.

We put in a great deal of hard work, and the process has been rewarding. It has strengthened our understanding of how the Council operates and, importantly, ensured that the real experiences of tenants like us, who use these services are heard—highlighting both what works well and what needs to improve.”



# Summary of the Tenant Satisfaction Report (Q3 2025/26)

Acuity, on behalf of North Yorkshire Council, asked tenants about their views on housing services, repairs, neighbourhoods, and how well the Council communicates and listens. Overall, most tenants feel positive about the service they receive.

This time, 77% of tenants said they are satisfied overall, which is an improvement from the previous quarter. 85% of tenants feel safe in their homes, and many find the Council easy to deal with (84%). Repairs carried out in the last 12 months were also viewed positively by 83% of tenants.

However, some areas still need improvement. Only 36% of tenants are happy with how complaints are handled, and 56% feel the Council deals well with antisocial behaviour. Many said they would like clearer updates and quicker action, particularly when reporting problems such as noise, neighbour issues, or repairs that take a long time.

About a quarter of tenants said they are experiencing damp or mould, and most of those have told the Council. Many tenants also said they are worried about the rising cost of living.

The full report is on the website here  
[northyorks.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-surveys](https://northyorks.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-surveys)



## Easter Bunny hunt – FREE prize draw!



Can you spot all the pink Easter bunnies? Count how many you can find in this issue and tell us your number to enter our free prize draw. One lucky winner will receive an Easter treat.

To enter, simply email your answer to [myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk) with your name, age, telephone number or email address (for your parent or carer if you are under 18 years old). Or you can send your answer in an envelope to Easter 2026 competition, Freepost Plus RTKB-GCTZ-JRSR, Document Management Service, North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Racecourse Lane, Northallerton, DL7 8AL. You don't need to use a stamp. Deadline for entries is **30 April 2026**.

The winner will be announced in the Summer edition of Open Door.

### Privacy Notice

North Yorkshire Council is a 'Data Controller' as defined by Article 4(7) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). We are collecting information for entry into a short term competition to win one prize. By submitting your contact details alongside your competition entry, you are providing consent under GDPR Article 6(1)(a) Consent to be contacted by North Yorkshire Council if you have won the competition. We will retain the information collecting for one month after the closing date. If you would like to withdraw consent please contact: My Housing Voice, North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL78 AD, or by email to [myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk) If you would like to contact the Council's Data Protection Officer, Veritau, the email address is [infogov@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@northyorks.gov.uk) For more information about how the Council uses your data, including your privacy rights and the complaints process, go to [northyorks.gov.uk/privacy-notice](https://northyorks.gov.uk/privacy-notice)



# Take the next step: Free Life Chats to unlock your potential

Feeling stuck and unsure where to turn? We're here for you!

The Skills Team at North Yorkshire Council is offering Life Chats, a completely free and friendly opportunity to talk one-to-one about your goals and aspirations. Whether you're thinking about getting into work, changing jobs, learning new skills, or even volunteering, we can help you take the next step.

## What is a Life Chat?

It's a relaxed, informal conversation with one of our team who understands the challenges you might be facing. We'll listen, share ideas, and help you explore options that fit your life. There's no pressure, just practical advice and encouragement.

Whether you want to talk over the phone or meet in your local café and chat over a cuppa, we can meet you where you feel most comfortable.

## Why book a Life Chat?

- It's free and tailored to you.
- You'll leave with ideas, resources, and a clear sense of your next steps.
- You'll get access to vouchers, learning resources, and our Thrive Pack - a goodie bag filled with wellbeing activities and practical tools to kick-start your journey.

It's our way of giving you a boost and showing that small steps can lead to big changes.

We've already helped over 90 people across the county to find their next steps with fantastic feedback:

"Having a Life Chat has opened opportunities to volunteering and employment programmes I didn't know existed."

"I have been able, with support from the team, to create some simple next steps that will make a big difference."

Ready to feel more confident about your future?

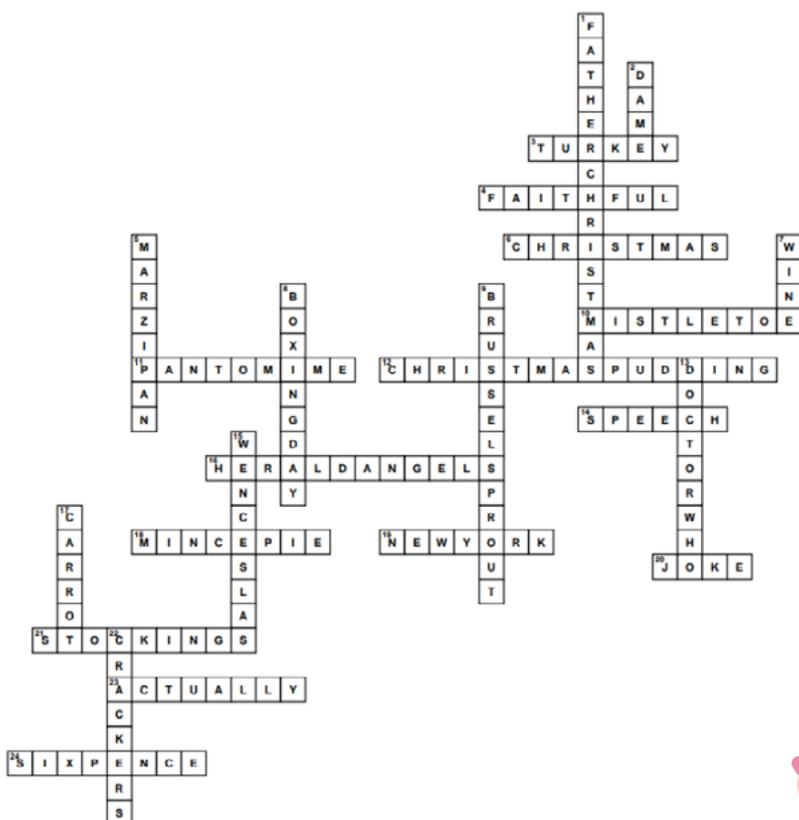
Book your Life Chat today and start your journey towards new opportunities.

Visit [northyorks.gov.uk/skillsprojects](http://northyorks.gov.uk/skillsprojects) or email [SkillsandCareers@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:SkillsandCareers@northyorks.gov.uk)

This project is supported by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, using funding from the Department for Work and Pensions' Get Britain Working Economic Inactivity Trailblazer.



## Winter edition crossword answers



### Down:

1. Father Christmas
2. Dame
3. Turkey
4. Faithful
5. Marzipan
7. Wine
8. Boxing Day
9. Brussel Sprout
13. Doctor Who
15. Wenceslas
17. Carrot
22. Crackers

### Across:

3. Turkey
4. Faithful
6. Christmas
10. Mistletoe
11. Pantomime
12. Christmas Pudding
14. Speech
16. Herald Angels
18. Mince Pie
19. New York
20. Joke
21. Stockings
23. Actually
24. Sixpence



# Spring Wordsearch

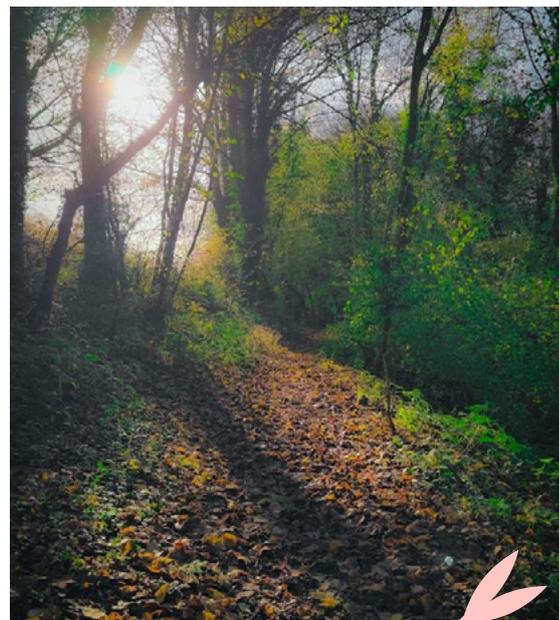


- |                |             |         |           |
|----------------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| Cherry Blossom | Tulip       | Breeze  | Bird      |
| Umbrella       | Grass       | Garden  | Butterfly |
| Green          | Flower      | Blossom | Nest      |
| Kite           | Caterpillar | Picnic  | Rain      |
| Daffodil       | Sunshine    |         |           |

# Photo competition winner announced

We are delighted to announce the winner of our Autumn/Winter 2025 photography competition – **Hilda Brittlebank** entered this enchanting image of an autumnal scene taken near Tadcaster.

Well done Hilda, and your shopping voucher is on its way!



# Spring recipe

## Single serve choc chip cookie

### Ingredients

- 16g salted softened butter
- 12.5g light brown sugar
- 9g white granulated sugar
- 1 large egg separated – you only need the yolk for this recipe, you can freeze the white for another recipe.
- 37g plain flour
- Small pinch bicarbonate of soda
- Small pinch baking powder
- 40g chocolate chips – a mixture or your preferred chocolate.

### Method

- In a bowl add the butter with the two sugars and mix together until combined using a wooden spoon or spatula.
- Add half the egg yolk and mix this into the butter & sugar mixture
- Mix in the flour, bicarb and baking powder
- Add in the rest of the egg and mix.

- Add in the chocolate chips and form the dough into a ball.
- Put the cookie ball onto some baking paper and pop into the freezer for 30 minutes.
- After 20 minutes turn on the oven and preheat to 180 degrees.
- Remove the cookie after 30 minutes and keeping on the baking paper pop the cookie onto a baking tray.
- Bake the cookie in the centre of the oven for 12mins.
- Remove and allow to cool down from hot to warm.
- You can double or triple this recipe if you just want a small batch.



# How to...



Please recycle this newsletter when you have finished reading it.

## ...get in touch

### [northyorks.gov.uk/contact-us](https://northyorks.gov.uk/contact-us)

By telephone: **0300 131 2 131** (please say **'housing'** when prompted)

North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

You can request this information in another language or format by emailing [myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk)

You can make sure your voice is heard by taking part in North Yorkshire Council consultations at [northyorks.gov.uk/consultations](https://northyorks.gov.uk/consultations)

## ...make a complaint

by telephone – call **0300 131 2 131** (please say **'housing'** when prompted).

Online using the form here [northyorks.gov.uk/complaints](https://northyorks.gov.uk/complaints)

In writing: North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

In person: to North Yorkshire Council housing staff

Or, via a third party/representative.

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our complaints handling you can contact the Housing Ombudsman: [housing-ombudsman.org.uk](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk) or call **0300 111 3000**

## ...report repairs/damp and mould

Online: [northyorks.gov.uk/housingrepair](https://northyorks.gov.uk/housingrepair)

Do not use the online form to report an emergency repair.

By telephone: **0300 131 2 131**. Please say **'Housing repairs'** when prompted.

### **Before you report a repair make sure that you have:**

- Checked if the repair is your responsibility or the council's responsibility
- Gathered as much information as you can about the repair.

If you are reporting an emergency repair outside normal office hours, and during weekends and bank holidays you should use the same contact telephone number; **0300 131 2 131**, which will connect you to the emergency repair call handling team. Go to [northyorks.gov.uk/outofhours](https://northyorks.gov.uk/outofhours) for more information.

**If you smell gas call the National Gas Network immediately on 0800 111 999 (minicom 0800 5875055).** If you have problems with damp and/or mould go to [northyorks.gov.uk/housingdamp](https://northyorks.gov.uk/housingdamp) or phone **0300 131 2 131** and say **'condensation, damp and mould'** when prompted.

### **Beware of 'No Win, No Fee' disrepair claims.**

Individuals may pressure you to sign legal papers without explaining risks. We would advise:

- Don't sign anything at the door
- Report repairs or make a complaint directly to us

You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman on 0300 111 3000 or go to [housing-ombudsman.org.uk](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

If you're experiencing domestic abuse, you are not alone - North Yorkshire Council can help with emergency accommodation, longer-term housing options, and referrals to specialist support services. Visit [northyorks.gov.uk/housing-domestic-abuse](https://northyorks.gov.uk/housing-domestic-abuse) for confidential advice and support.

### **Would you be happy to get this newsletter on email?**

Let us know by emailing [myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:myhousingvoice@northyorks.gov.uk)

